

## Message Text

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TO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 082179

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING REPEAT CANBERRA 2198 ACTION SECSTATE INFO  
SYDNEY MELBOURNE 10 APRIL.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, PINT, US, PFOR

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON INDOCHINA AND AUSTRALIAN  
DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES

1. SUMMARY. THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT RECONVENED ON APRIL  
8 WITH A SPIRITED DEBATE ON INDOCHINA AND AUSTRALIA'S DE-  
FENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES. IN THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE,  
BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OPPOSITION LEADER STRESSED  
THE VALUE OF AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES  
AND OF RESPONSIBLE U S INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.  
THE DEBATE COVERED ALL ASPECTS OF PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE  
AUSTRALIAN POLICIES TOWARDS INDOCHINA AS WELL AS AN OPPO-  
SITION ATTACK UPON THE PREMISES OF THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT'S  
DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES. END SUMMARY

2. DURING THE COURSE OF HIS SPEECH ON INDOCHINA PRIME MIN-  
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ISTER WHITLAM SAID:

3. QTE. AS TO THE UNITED STATES, SHE HAS FULFILLED ANY OBLIGATIONS SHE ASSUMED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SAIGON. NEITHER THE HONOUR NOR THE INTERESTS OF A GREAT PEOPLE CAN BE CONFIDED TO ANY PARTICULAR FOREIGN REGIME. BUT THE UNITED STATES' HONOUR AND INTERESTS DO LIE IN HELPING REBUILD A UNIFIED VIETNAM, THE UNIFICATION OF WHICH MISGUIDED POLICIES, MISTAKEN POLICIES OF THE PAST SO LONG DELAYED....THAT IS THE WAY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO REGAIN HER REAL PLACE OF LEADERSHIP IN OUR REGIME....AND IN THAT TASK AUSTRALIA, SO FAR AS THIS GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED, WILL BE A GOOD PARTNER WITH THE UNITED STATES.

4. QTE. WHILE THE SECURITY OF AUSTRALIA HAS NEVER RESTED SOLELY UPON THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE, THAT ALLIANCE REMAINS A KEY ELEMENT IN IT. AND WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE EVENTS NOW UNFOLDING IN VIETNAM, THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY REMAIN UNTOUCHED. END QTE

5. OPPOSITION FRASER STATED:

6. QTE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN VIETNAM IS BOUND TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON UNITED STATES OPINION. THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IS PROBABLY MORE UNPREDICTABLE BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF CONGRESS THAN IT HAD BEEN IN PAST YEARS AND THAT IS, I SUPPOSE, BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT SOME SIGNIFICANT FIGURES WHO SUPPORT OR WHO ARE NOTED FOR A CAUSE AND WHO CARRY CONGRESS WITH THEM. THERE IS NO CERTAIN MAJORITY FOR A PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION.

7. QTE BUT IN TERMS OF MAINTAINING A STRONG UNITED STATES POLICY AROUND THE WORLD THE UNITY OF THE CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PEACE AND WELL-BEING OF THE WORLD. WHATEVER AUSTRALIA CAN DO SHE OUGHT TO DO TO HELP ACHIEVE THAT OBJECTIVE. I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN CONTINUED UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN SENSIBLE, PROPER, AND JUST CAUSES. BUT IT WOULD BE IDLE NOT TO ASSUME THAT THERE WILL BE PRESSURES FOR ISOLATION AND WITHDRAWAL AND THESE PRESSURES HAVE BEEN INCREASED NOT INFREQUENTLY BY THE ACTIONS THAT THE PRESENT (AUSTRALIAN) GOVERNMENT AND SPOKESMEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT, WHETHER NAMED AS FOREIGN MINISTER OR NOT, HAVE TAKEN OVER  
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THE LAST YEAR OR TWO. END QTE

8. THE OPPOSITION TOOK THE LINE THAT THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT TOOK A ONE-SIDED VIEW OF THE CONFLICT WHICH FAVORED HANOI AND THAT IT WAS UNWILLING TO ATTEMPT TO GET HANOI AND ITS ALLIES TO STOP THE CONFLICT. THE BEST SHOT WAS FIRED BY THE SHADOW DEFENSE MINISTER, MHR KILLEN:

9. QTE I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE REMARKABLE, DOVE-LIKE MINISTER WHO IS THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WITH HIS POWERFUL FRIENDS IN HANOI, WHICH IS THE DESCRIPTION HE GAVE INT QTE I AM PROUD TO CALL THESE PEOPLE MY FRIENDS END INT QTE AND WHO TAKES THE VIEW THAT ALL VIRTUE, COM-PASSION, UNDERSTANDING AND LOVE FOR PEACE IS BOUND UP IN HIS ONE BODY AND THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE NO UNDERSTANDING OF THOSE THINGS, WOULD HAVE REACHED OUT AND SAID TO HIS FRIENDS IN HANOI INT QTE IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY STOP THIS. END INT QTE BUT NO, THE HONORABLE GENTLEMAN CAME INTO THE CHAMBER WITH TAUNTS, INSULTS AND CHARGES. THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS SUPPORTERS TOOK THE LINE THAT THE CONFLICT IN VIET-NAM WAS AND ALWAYS HAD BEEN A CIVIL WAR AND THAT IN WHITLAM'S OWN WORDS INT QTE WHO RULES IN SAIGON IS NOT, AND NEVER HAS BEEN, AN INGREDIENT IN AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY. END INT QTE. END QTE. WHITLAM ALSO TOOK HIS NOW FAMILAR LINE THAT THE CONFLICT WOULD NOT HAVE DRAGGED ON SO LONG HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR OUTSIDE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE WARRING PARTIES BY THE UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE PRG.

10. THE OPPOSITION ALSO CHARGED THAT CURRENT AND PLANNED AUSTRALIAN RELIEF EFFORTS IN VIETNAM WERE INADEQUATE AND THAT THE PROBABLE OUTCOME IN VIETNAM UNDERCUT THE BASIS OF THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES; THE ASSUMP-TION THAT AUSTRALIA FACES NO THREAT TO ITS SECURITY IN THE NEXT FIFTEEN YEARS.

11. WHITLAM DEFENDED GOA'S RELIEF EFFORTS AS GENEROUS, CITING CINCPAC'S MESSAGE ON THE DISPATCH OF AUSTRALIAN C-130S TO VIETNAM AND AMBASSADOR GREEN'S PRIVATE CONVER-SATION WITH DFA SECRETARY ALAN RENOUF ON AUSTRALIAN RE-LIEF EFFORTS.

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12. COMMENT. PRESS DISCUSSION OF THE DEBATE CENTERED AROUND THE RELATIVE PERFORMANCES OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. FRASER WHO WAS MAKING HIS DEBUT AS OPPOSITION LEADER. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE DEBATE WAS A DRAW, WHICH UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WAS A CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL TRIMUMPH FOR MR. FRASER. THE PRIME MINISTER GAVE NOTICE THAT HE PLANNED TO SPEAK ON INDOCHINA AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. WHERE-AS WHITLAM HAD A CAREFULLY PREPARED SPEECH WHICH HE DELIVERED IN HIS BEST STYLE; FRASER SPOKE ONLY FROM NOTES. SEASONED POLITICAL PROS WERE IMPRESSED BY HIS PERFORMANCE AND JUDG-ING BY THIS FIRST ROUND IT APPEARS THAT WHITLAM NOW HAS AN OPPONENT WHO CAN STAND UP TO HIM IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. THIS ASPECT OF THE DEBATE OBSCURED THE FACT THAT THE OPPOSI-TION HAS CHOSEN TO CONCENTRATE ON THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT'S ASSUMPTION THAT AUSTRALIA FACES NO THREAT TO ITS SECURITY

IN THE NEXT FIFTEEN YEARS. THIS IS AN AREA IN WHICH THE  
GOVERNMENT IS VULNERABLE AND WE BELIEVE THAT THE OPPOSITION  
WILL CONTINUE TO HAMMER AWAY ON THE ISSUE IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.  
GREEN  
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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